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DEPARTMENT FOR THE SECRETARY
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SUBJECT: LETTER FROM ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU TO THE
SECRETARY REGARDING THE SUDAN

¶1. Embassy London received on December 10 the following letter for the Secretary from Archbishop Desmond Tutu as the Chair of The Elders Foundation. The letter is copied to U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Susan Rice and the President's Special Envoy to Sudan General Scott Gration.

¶2. BEGIN TEXT OF LETTER:

Mrs. Hilary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State of the United States of America
Washington, DC
United States of America

Cape Town, 8 December 2009

Dear Secretary of State,

As Chair of a group of global leaders known as The Elders, I am writing to you regarding the urgent need for your government to join directly with other key members of the international community in supporting the transition to democracy, peace and security in Sudan. As we approach the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), we are deeply concerned that increased violence and instability in Sudan are on the horizon. We call for immediate action, a comprehensive approach and greater international cooperation to address the numerous challenges that the country is facing and prevent a return to conflict, which would have a devastating impact on human lives and regional security.

Since being brought together by Nelson Mandela in July 2007, the Elders have been closely following events in Sudan. Our first trip as a group was to Sudan in October 2007: Lakhdar Brahimi, Jimmy Carter, Graca Machel and I met political leaders from Northern and Southern Sudan, representatives of UN agencies and the African Union, and diplomats. In Darfur we met tribal leaders, women's groups, civil society leaders and internally displaced persons.

Violence, displacement, human rights abuses and poverty have taken a toll on the people we met. We heard many painful and heartbreaking stories. But we were equally inspired by the people's optimism and hope for the future. They told us that they longed to have a say in shaping the future of their country; they wanted educational and economic opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty; and they yearned for a secure and prosperous future for their children and grandchildren.

The people of Sudan have suffered for too long. The grave humanitarian situation and current levels of violence remain

of immense concern to us. Furthermore, Africa's largest country is approaching an historical conjuncture of national elections scheduled for April 2010, a post-election 'popular consultation' in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, a referendum for self-determination in the South scheduled for January 2011 and a renewed peace process for Darfur. Each of these events is contested by Sudan's political forces; cooperation and consensus are elusive.

Unless the people and leaders of Northern Sudan and Southern Sudan come together to complete the terms of the CPA and prepare for the upcoming elections and a peaceful referendum, the nation faces even greater peril. Failure to contain the real prospect of a return to large-scale conflict will have grave consequences for the people of Sudan and neighboring countries - and might affect the entire African continent.

It is crucial for the electoral processes in Sudan to be free, open and inclusive - involving all people and regions of Sudan, including the internally displaced persons and those in the rebel-controlled areas in Darfur - in order for the outcome to be credible and to pave the way towards genuine democratization and political reform. Full and unfettered access by international and national election observers to monitor and report on the electoral processes is also vital to ensuring that the Sudanese population has confidence in the results. Unless the elections live up to democratic standards, they will likely exacerbate violence.

The Elders believe that it is essential that the international community develops and implements a clear, coherent and comprehensive strategy on Sudan - addressing the current electoral and governance challenges that the country

faces as well as the situation beyond the referendum. Your government has an indispensable role to play in working with other key countries and regional and international institutions to ensure that the CPA is implemented in full and that the various concerns about the preparations for the elections and referendum are addressed. We fear that the historic opportunity offered by the CPA might be lost unless the international community comes together and intensifies its efforts to safeguard the future of Sudan and its people. We call on you to contribute to a united and comprehensive approach.

My fellow Elders and I stand ready and willing to support you - and the wider international community as a whole - in living up to our collective responsibilities to ensure that the will of the Sudanese people prevails and that stability and prosperity befall all of Sudan.

Swift and bold action is needed to avoid yet another humanitarian disaster on the African continent. The time to act is now.

God Bless You.

(signed)

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu
Chair, The Elders

cc:

- H. E. Ambassador Susan E. Rice, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations
- General Scott Gration, United States Special Envoy to Sudan

END TEXT OF LETTER.

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http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:United_Kingdom

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